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NEW PRODUCT SAFETY CAMPAIGN GEARED TO KEEP WHEELS TURNING

Prams, strollers and vehicle trolley jacks will be at the centre of a new national product safety campaign .

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gail Gago said Officers from the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) will join forces with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) and other regulators to ensure retailers and suppliers are meeting national safety standards.

“The ACCC and the State and Territory product safety regulators are working together in a coordinated national surveillance program, which will focus on high risk consumer products that can cause serious injury or in worse cases, death.”

“Eight high risk products that have caused injury or death are being surveyed across Australia to ensure they meet safety regulations. OCBA will focus on the monitoring of prams, strollers and vehicle trolley jacks,” Minister Gago said.

A new mandatory safety standard for prams and strollers was introduced in July 2008 after tragic incidents involving runaway strollers.

“Under the standard all prams and strollers must have warning labels and a tether strap that should be placed around the wrist to avoid the risk of runaway prams.”

“Product safety officers will visit pram and stroller retailers to ensure the regulations concerning brakes, labelling and safety mechanisms are being followed. “

“Parents are urged to keep their babies as safe as possible and should check prams and strollers to ensure they have working brakes and tether straps.

Hydraulic trolley jacks will also come under scrutiny after laws were introduced two years ago requiring them to carry labels warning consumers not to climb under a vehicle supported only by a trolley jack.

Thirty-one Australians died between 2000 and 2009 from injuries sustained because of incorrect use or collapse of trolley jacks.

"People must heed the warnings and never get under a vehicle supported only by a trolley jack,"

"Hydraulic jacks are designed only to raise the vehicle and when working under the vehicle suitable supports should be used for stability."

"Never place any part of your body under a raised car unless it is sitting securely on safety stands or vehicle ramps and never use a jack on an uneven or soft surface or in loose gravel," Ms Gago said.

Investigations are expected to be complete by 30 June 2010, with findings to be reported in July.

If any of the goods tested are found not to comply with the mandatory standards, traders will be asked to immediately remove the items from sale. OCBA may then ask the supplier to recall the product, issue a warning or expiation notice. Penalties of up to \$10,000 can be imposed by a court where goods are found not to comply.

Consumers can keep up-to-date with any current product safety issues by visiting www.productsafety.gov.au.